

BHDDH Direct Support Professional and Job Coach Wage Increases
Instructions for Providers

The FY 2017 Enacted Budget designates \$5,088,541 to increase wages currently paid to Direct Support Professionals and Job Coaches employed at Developmental Disability Organizations (DDOs) licensed by the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH). The Federal District Court Consent Decree calls for wage increases to direct support staff in recognition that these wages have not been increased for a long period of time, which makes it difficult for agencies to meet the system transformation goals of the Consent Decree. To effectuate these increases, BHDDH is changing the rates paid to DDOs on October 1, 2016. In addition, these adjusted rates will be applied retroactively for services rendered between dates of service July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016. In particular, changes are being made to increase the Direct Support Professional (DSP) hourly wage component of the rate from \$11.55 per hour to \$11.91.

Required Disbursement of Rate Increases:

In accordance with enacted legislation requiring the increase of rates to support Direct Support Professionals, the Division requires that each agency provide the entirety of the difference between old rates and new rates as raises to Direct Support Professional staff, less associated payroll costs (fringe). Although the Division is requiring that these resources be applied to Direct Support Professional raises, providers are afforded flexibility to apply these raises in the manner deemed most appropriate. For instance, providers may opt to increase the average hourly wage for all DSPs and/or increase the starting wage, amongst other potential options.

Required Documentation from Providers:

In order to collect data to assure that the additional funds are directed to Direct Support Professionals and job coaching staff, the Department requires that all providers submit payroll data reflecting wage scales pre-raise and post-raise. The following steps will be required from each provider to demonstrate that this legislative mandate has been met:

- 1.) Complete the attached excel spreadsheet entitled “Table for Hourly Wage Reporting”. This spreadsheet must be completed for all Direct Support Professionals that worked for your agency after July 1, 2016.
 - a. The spreadsheet must include the employee name, job title, hourly wage pre and post raise, the average weekly hours worked, amount of back pay they will be provided (between July 1, 2016 and the implementation of the new rates) and the number of hours worked for back pay.
 - b. The spreadsheet must also include the providers name and a contact person for questions regarding payroll information.
- 2.) The Table for Hourly Wage Reporting must be emailed to Adam Brusseau (adam.brusseau@bhddh.ri.gov) on or before November 18, 2016.

The above timeline is intended to provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that the retroactive payments will be received and disbursed to employees appropriately. Please contact the division if you have any questions regarding this process.

Required Action to Receive Hourly Wage Resources added to L9 Funding

Due to billing system constraints and the way in which L9 authorizations are paid, the Division is unable to create a mass adjustment for these claims. To minimize the steps that providers need to take to access these funds, the Division will increase all L9 authorizations consistent with the percentage change within the new rate structure. Providers may bill against the additional authorization to receive payments to support hourly wage increases. All current L9 authorizations within HP will be increased by this same percent for future quarters until either the authorization ends or a new L9 is approved. All future L9 authorizations will contain funding associated with the new rates.

Required Action to Receive Hourly Wage Resources for Self-Directed Individuals

Due to billing system constraints and the way in which payments are made for Self-Directed individuals, the Division is unable to create a mass adjustment for claims relating to day and community based authorizations (all other claims will mass adjust). To minimize the steps necessary to access these funds, the Division will enter an adjustment equivalent to the differential between previous tier package authorizations and new tier package authorizations. The additional authorization may be billed against to receive payments to support hourly wage increases for direct support and job coaching staff. Authorizations for future quarters will contain this adjustment until new Purchase Orders are received.

In keeping with current practices to provide self-directed individuals autonomy in the way that they procure services, the Division will not require payroll data from these individuals. It is expected that self-directed individuals utilize the increase in their tier packages to enhance wages paid to individuals that they contract with.

Question and Answer Conference Call

To address any additional questions that arise from this instructional memo, the Division will hold a conference call on 9/29/2016 at 12:00. Conference call information is as follows:

Call in Number: 1-877-988-2155

Participant Code: 33456606

Dates

New Rates available – 9/22/2016

Back pay available – 9/30/2016